

MOBILE BAY

THE LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE FOR MOBILE AND BALDWIN COUNTIES

June 2017

BALDWIN COUNTY ISSUE

CAP'N TOM

Sonny Brewer and his pal, Tom Yeager,
talk boat building and a life well spent
exploring our local waterways

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FEATURES

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CREWMAN MIKE CHEATWOOD SHOWS OFF JUST A HANDFUL OF THE DAY'S CATCH ON THE CAPT. SID SHRIMP BOAT / PHOTO BY MATTHEW COUGHLIN

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Net Profits

We chow down on Alabama shrimp, but do you know how it got to your plate?

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Guardians of Our Waters

It takes a village — and a top-notch organization — to keep our Bay and beautiful environment safe and clean.

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This bayside home is perfect for summers on the water and family visits that never end.

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The Serenity of Chris Knight

An avid traveler puts his favorite scenes on canvas for others — and himself — to appreciate.

ON OUR COVER



Waterman Tom Yeager is a jack of all trades when it comes to enjoying life on the Eastern Shore.

PHOTO BY TODD DOUGLAS

»» Meet the shrimpers at the dock to grab a pound or two of fresh catch, then head home to prepare Sally Stringfellow's recipe for Pan-roasted Shrimp and Okra over Corn Consommé, page 34.

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THE GANG'S ALL HERE

*Building the perfect home
where three generations
can gather by the Bay takes
experience, preparation
and a dash of history.*

text by MAGGIE LACEY
photos by TED MILES

Gus, the overgrown white lab puppy, comes barreling from the driveway, through the back door and straight out the front again, pink tongue lolling with glee. He long ago busted out the bottom pane on the screen door, and he charges through the open space toward the Bay, ready for a swim. When the kids and grandkids get out of the car behind him, the scene doesn't look that different. Everyone has on a swimsuit and either cannonballs into the pool overlooking Mobile Bay or heads straight to the wharf. Another weekend has begun at the Taul residence.

RIGHT The home, designed by Walcott Adams Verneuille Architects, has classic appeal, with painted brick and board and batten siding. The guest cottage over the garage hosts the Tauls' daughter when she visits from California with her family.

OPPOSITE Homeowners Susan and Tom Taul get a shower of pool water from their "grand-dog" Gus, while Mae Taul and her cousin Lilibet Taul look on. The bayfront swimming pool brings fun to every family event.





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THIS PAGE Susan Taul wanted a large open kitchen "since everyone ends up in there anyway." The bright windows overlook several ancient live oaks and Mobile Bay. Alabama white marble tops the cabinetry, designed by Augusta Tapia, and a custom hanging vent hood separates the breakfast nook.





ABOVE The living room walls and bookcases are paneled in sinker cypress, adding a touch of warmth to the otherwise bright white home.

LEFT TOP The foyer features a sophisticated vignette that is a mix of inherited and found antiques. Horizontal boards give the walls a coastal feel.

LEFT BOTTOM Homeowners Susan and Tom Taul stand in front of the outdoor fireplace on their bayfront screened porch. They keep a comfy chair waiting for anyone who stops by.



Everything about Susan and Tom Taul's new bayfront home in Fairhope was designed for easy family living. The large open living space can accommodate piles of grandkids around the kitchen island while Susan makes roux and Tom picks crabs for a big pot of gumbo. The guest bathroom, with split brick floors, opens right to the pool area so grandkids can come in without dripping a trail of water across the living room. With several guest bedrooms and a carriage house to boot, there is a bed for anyone who wants to stay. The house has countless options for a comfortable spot to sit or swing and watch the water. Every seat seems to have a good view.

Susan and Tom are no strangers to the process of homebuilding — this was their third new construction project. And while a new home can offer space, storage and energy efficiency, the Tauls made sure to give it a sense of history, too. Classic proportions, natural building materials, deep porches and transom windows all help create the feel of an old Bay house.

The furnishings continue that effort, too, with collected antiques and upscale hand-me-downs used throughout. Every piece in the house has some sort of story — the chest that Susan bought with her first paycheck as a nurse “a million years ago,” the painting of Tom's great-grandmother from his dad's house on Hollinger's Island, the Mary Kirk Kelly ceramic vegetables that Tom's mother collected. Each corner of the house, each vignette, reflects a certain nostalgia that cannot be bought overnight.

Architect Lea Verneuille, with Fairhope firm Walcott Adams Verneuille, says that working with homeowners so knowledgeable about the design-build process was a gift. The Tauls had ideas for every room in the house and were already well versed in materials and finishes. Lea, along with contractor Bill Cherry and interior designer Ann Luce, rounded out the team that the Tauls assembled to make their detailed vision come together.

While the palette is neutral and bright with a decidedly coastal vibe, the Tauls used accent wood to warm up all the white. Dark stained oak floors and custom red oak beams layer nicely alongside the exquisite sinker cypress paneling in the living room, which Tom sourced himself from a mill in Montgomery. This confident mix gives the house a sophisticated and handsome look. Painted pine walls, soft fabrics and collected art round out the interior. While much of the family's time is spent outside on one of the porches or by one of two outdoor fireplaces, the indoor spaces keep a close connection to the landscape with bright expanses of windows. When Susan heads inside to prep the next shrimp boil or hotdog cookout, or just grab some popsicles for all the kids, she won't miss what's happening out front.

While the youngest generation (and their dogs) enjoy the water, the Tauls' daughter-in-law, Nonie, looks over and comments that Susan and Tom's hospitality can best be described one way. If you come for lunch, they will talk you into staying for dinner. If you come for dinner, you'll stay the night. One look at the inviting, practical and beautiful space they've created makes it easy to see how a quick visit can turn into a long, leisurely stay. **MB**

OPPOSITE A bayfront home has two front doors according to architect Lea Verneuille. Both the road entrance (referred to by locals as the back door) and the water entrance (the front) are equally important. The Tauls' front door sets the tone for how they live in the house, with several porches and comfortable sitting areas of all sorts.

RIGHT The guest bathroom opens right to the pool and features split brick floors for easy cleanup from wet feet. Susan keeps stacks of towels handy. A needlepoint crab made by Tom's mother is another nostalgic piece the couple has saved.

BOTTOM On any given weekend at the Tauls' home, you will find cousins McRae and Annie Taul sharing a rocker on one of the porches overlooking the pool while Mae and Lillibet enjoy the swing.

